

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN KS US
SUBJ: PAK TONG-SON SUBPOENA PRESS REACTION

1. SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS REPORTED HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAK TONG-SON SUBPOENA IN FRONTPAGE HEADLINE ARTICLES. EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS TO PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED ROK-US AGREEMENT AND ON POSSIBILITY THAT PAK MAY DECLINE TO GO TO US. NO EDITORIAL COMMENT AS YET. END SUMMARY.

2. DONG-A ILBO HEADLINED STORY AS "NEW COMPLICATION IN PAK'S RETURN TO US TO GIVE EVIDENCE", CHOSEN ILBO AS "FIRST DIFFICULTY IN IMPLEMENTING ROK-US AGREEMENT", HANKUK ILBO AS "NEW OBSTACLE TO PAK TONG-SON AGREEMENT". KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN QUOTED FONMIN PAK TONG-CHIN AS SAYING THAT "THERE IS NO DENYING THAT THE SUBPOENA MAY BECOME AN OBSTRUCTING FACTOR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CASE". DONG-A ILBO CARRIED SAME STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED ONLY TO MOFA OFFICIAL. KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN QUOTED ONE MOFA SOURCE: "APPEARANCE OF PAK TONG-SON BEFORE THE CONGRESS IS UP TO PAK HIMSELF. HE HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION NOT TO APPEAR. IT IS DOUBTFUL HE WILL COMPLY WITH THE SUBPOENA." DONG-A
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ILBO CARRIED MOFA QUOTE: "MR. PAK'S ATTITUDE HAS BEEN THAT HE WOULD NOT CONSENT TO ANY REQUEST EXCEPT HIS TESTIMONY AT COURT. IT IS DOUBTFUL HE WOULD COMPLY WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL SUBPOENA, AND PARTICULARLY DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD WANT TO GO TO THE US UNDER THE CONGRESSIONAL SUBPOENA ALREADY ISSUED TO HIM." SEOUL SHINMUN IN DISPATCH FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT QUOTED CIVILETTI AS SAYING:

"THE SUBPOENA MAY BRING A CHANGE OF MIND TO PAK WHO HAD VOLUNTEERED TO COME TO TESTIFY. HE HAS NOT YET REVEALED HIS OWN INTENTION." HANKUK ILBO GOSSIP COLUMN REPORTED THAT FONMIN SHOWED SOME DISPLEASURE WITH SUBPOENA; OTHER OFFICIALS QUESTIONED WHETHER SUBPOENA MIGHT NOT HAVE SOME HIDDEN MEANING, SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS THE USG DOES NOT WANT PAK TONG-SON'S TESTIMONY IN US. CHOSEN ILBO STORY STATED ROKG DENOUNCED THE SUBPOENA AS "AN ACT PREVENTING RESOLUTION OF THE CASE; PAK MAY CHANGE HIS MIND".

3. ARTICLES EMPHASIZED THAT ROKG POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED AND MOFA PRESUMES THE USG POSITION IS UNCHANGED ALSO. KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN QUOTED A MOFA OFFICIAL: "THE ROKG POSITION IS THAT THE AGREEMENT MUST BE FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTED. AS FAR AS IS KNOWN, THE USG POSITION IS THE SAME." HANKUK ILBO REPORTED THAT THE ROKG FEELS NEW NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNNECESSARY AND THAT THE ROK-US AGREEMENT MUST BE IMPLEMENTED; MOFA ANTICIPATED THE SUBPOENA DURING THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE USG HAD SUGGESTED THE CONGRESS MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO SUBSTITUTE CONTENTS OF PAK'S COURT TESTIMONY IN PLACE OF DIRECT TESTIMONY. CHUNGANG ILBO QUOTED MOFA SPOKESMAN: "WE HAVE NO WAY BUT TO TRUST THE USG, WHICH IS OUR COUNTERPART IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS." IN THE DONG-A ILBO, ONE SOURCE SUGGESTED: "THE FACT THAT THE CONGRESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUED THE SUBPOENA BEFORE PAK CAME TO THE US INDICATES CONGRESS IS USING THE SUBPOENA AS A MEANS OF POLITICAL PRESSURE AGAINST THE US ADMINISTRATION TO OBTAIN THE FACTS IT NEEDS. WHETHER THE TRUE CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IS TO NULLIFY THE AGREEMENT OR TO SECURE THE FACTS REMAINS TO BE SEEN". HANKUK ILBO SUGGESTED THREE-WAY NEGOTIATIONS BY CONGRESS, US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, AND THE ROKG MAY BE NECESSARY.

4. COMMENT: ISSUANCE OF SUBPOENA AT THIS EARLY STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PAK TONG-SON AGREEMENT HAS OBVIOUSLY CAUSED CONCERN HERE. FOLLOWING INITIAL PRESS PLAY, WE HAVE AGREED WITH MOFA THAT WE WILL TAKE THE POSITION THAT PAK AGREEMENT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED ONE STEP AT A TIME AND THE FIRST STEP IS THE ACTIVITIES IN SEOUL WHICH ARE NOW IN TRAIN. STERN

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